

IN THE CLAIMS:

Cancel claims 1-38 (all pending claims) and replace them without prejudice with the following new claim 39:

/ 39. (New) De-feathering apparatus comprising:

a plurality of elongating picking elements comprising structures selected from the group consisting of: filaments, fibers, bristles, wires, and substantially rigid threads, said elements consist essentially of a material which has a mass per unit length which is substantially less than rubber;

said picking elements having first and second ends ^{and coupled} ~~said~~ ~~first ends being affixed~~ to at least a first rotatable unit connected to a motor driven system for causing rotation of said rotatable unit and which is functionally installed on a motorized picking apparatus comprising:

a first bank of rotatable units having a plurality of said picking elements affixed thereon; and

a second bank of rotatable units having a plurality of said picking elements affixed thereon, said second bank of rotatable units located so as to be spaced apart from and substantially opposite said first bank of rotatable units such that said first and said second banks of rotatable units define a space

therebetween for passage of a line of poultry therethrough;

and each of said first and second banks of rotatable units including a plurality of disks comprising first and second outer walls defining a hollow interior space therebetween, one of the first and second outer walls including a plurality of apertures, the picking elements extending through one of the apertures and into the hollow interior space, then extending out of another of the apertures to form a portion of the picking elements not inside the hollow interior space.

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2 ~~40~~. (New) De-feathering apparatus according to claim ~~39~~¹
wherein said picking elements have a length to diameter ratio of
at least approximately 10:1.

3 ~~41~~. (New) De-feathering apparatus according to claim ~~40~~²
wherein said picking elements have diameters selected from
between 10 and 240 mils.

4 ~~42~~. (New) De-feathering apparatus according to claim ~~41~~³
wherein said picking elements are comprised of a crystalline
resin polymer base material.

5 ~~43~~. (New) De-feathering apparatus according to claim ~~42~~⁴
wherein said picking elements are comprised of a nylon base
material.

6 ~~44~~. (New) De-feathering apparatus according to claim ~~43~~¹
wherein said first bank and said second bank of rotatable units
rotate in opposite directions one from the other.

7 ~~45~~. (New) De-feathering apparatus according to claim ~~44~~⁶
wherein adjacently located rotatable units are constructed so as
to rotate in opposite directions one from the other.

8 ~~46~~. (New) De-feathering apparatus according to claim ~~44~~⁶
wherein said first and said second banks of rotatable units each
include at least two rows and at least four columns of rotatable
units.

9 ~~47~~. (New) De-feathering apparatus according to claim ~~44~~⁶
wherein each rotatable unit in said first and second banks of
rotatable units is connected to a motor driven system for causing

rotation of said rotatable unit at a rate selected from between 200 and 2000 revolutions per minute.

¹⁰
~~46~~. (New) De-feathering apparatus according to claim ⁹~~47~~ wherein each said rotatable unit of said first and said second banks of rotatable units is adjustable in orientation thereby to provide tailorability of said motorized picking apparatus for de-feathering multiple sizes of poultry.

¹¹
~~48~~. (New) De-feathering apparatus according to claim ¹⁰~~48~~ wherein said space between said first and said second banks of rotatable units is adjustable in size.

¹²
~~50~~. (New) De-feathering apparatus according to claim ¹¹~~49~~ further including a fluid line having at least one fluid jet for providing a water spray source to said first and said second banks of rotatable units.

¹³
~~51~~. (New) De-feathering apparatus according to claim ¹~~49~~ wherein said picking elements are affixed to said rotatable units in closely packed clusters.

¹⁴
~~52~~. (New) De-feathering apparatus according to claim ¹³~~51~~ wherein each said rotatable unit comprises a rotatable disk and includes a plurality of picking element clusters spaced apart one from another, each said picking element clusters comprising approximately 50-150 picking elements.

¹⁵
~~53~~. (New) De-feathering apparatus according to claim ¹⁴~~52~~ wherein said plurality of picking element clusters extend substantially perpendicularly from a face of said rotatable disk.

¹⁶
~~54~~. (New) De-feathering apparatus according to claim ¹⁴~~52~~
wherein said plurality of picking element clusters extend at
angles selected from between 45-90 degrees from a face of said
rotatable disk.

¹⁷
~~55~~. (New) De-feathering apparatus according to claim ¹~~39~~
wherein said picking elements are crimped along a substantial
portion of their length.

¹⁸
~~56~~. (New) De-feathering apparatus according to claim ¹~~39~~
wherein said picking elements are serrated along a substantial
portion of their length.

¹⁹
~~57~~. (New) De-feathering apparatus according to claim ¹~~39~~
wherein said picking elements are crimped along a substantial
portion of their length and are comprised of a crystalline resin
polymer base material.

²⁰
~~58~~. (New) De-feathering apparatus according to claim ¹~~39~~
wherein said picking elements are corkscrewed along a substantial
portion of their length.

²¹
~~59~~. (New) De-feathering apparatus according to claim ¹~~39~~
wherein said picking elements are tapered along a substantial
portion of their length.

²²
~~60~~. (New) De-feathering apparatus according to claim ¹~~39~~
wherein said picking elements have substantially rounded tips.

²³
~~61~~. (New) A method of de-feathering poultry by using the
apparatus according to claim ¹~~39~~, said method comprising:
rotating said plurality of elongated picking elements about

an axis; and

causing a poultry carcass to contact said rotating plurality of elongated picking elements;

said elongated picking elements comprising structures selected from the group consisting of: filaments, fibers, bristles, wires, and substantially rigid threads.

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62. (New) A method of de-feathering poultry according to claim ~~61~~²³ wherein said picking elements having a length to diameter ratio of at least approximately 10:1.

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63. (New) A method of de-feathering poultry according to claim ~~62~~²⁴ wherein said picking elements have diameters selected from between 10 and 240 mils.

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64. (New) A method of de-feathering poultry according to claim ~~63~~²⁵ wherein said picking elements are comprised of a crystalline resin polymer base material.

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65. (New) A method of de-feathering poultry according to claim ~~64~~²⁶ wherein said picking elements are comprised of a nylon base material.

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66. (New) A method of de-feathering poultry according to claim ~~65~~²⁷ further including passing a poultry carcass between opposing banks of rotating units having picking elements extending therefrom.

29
67. (New) A method of de-feathering poultry according to claim ~~66~~²⁸ further including causing oppositely facing rotating units to counter rotate one with respect to the other.